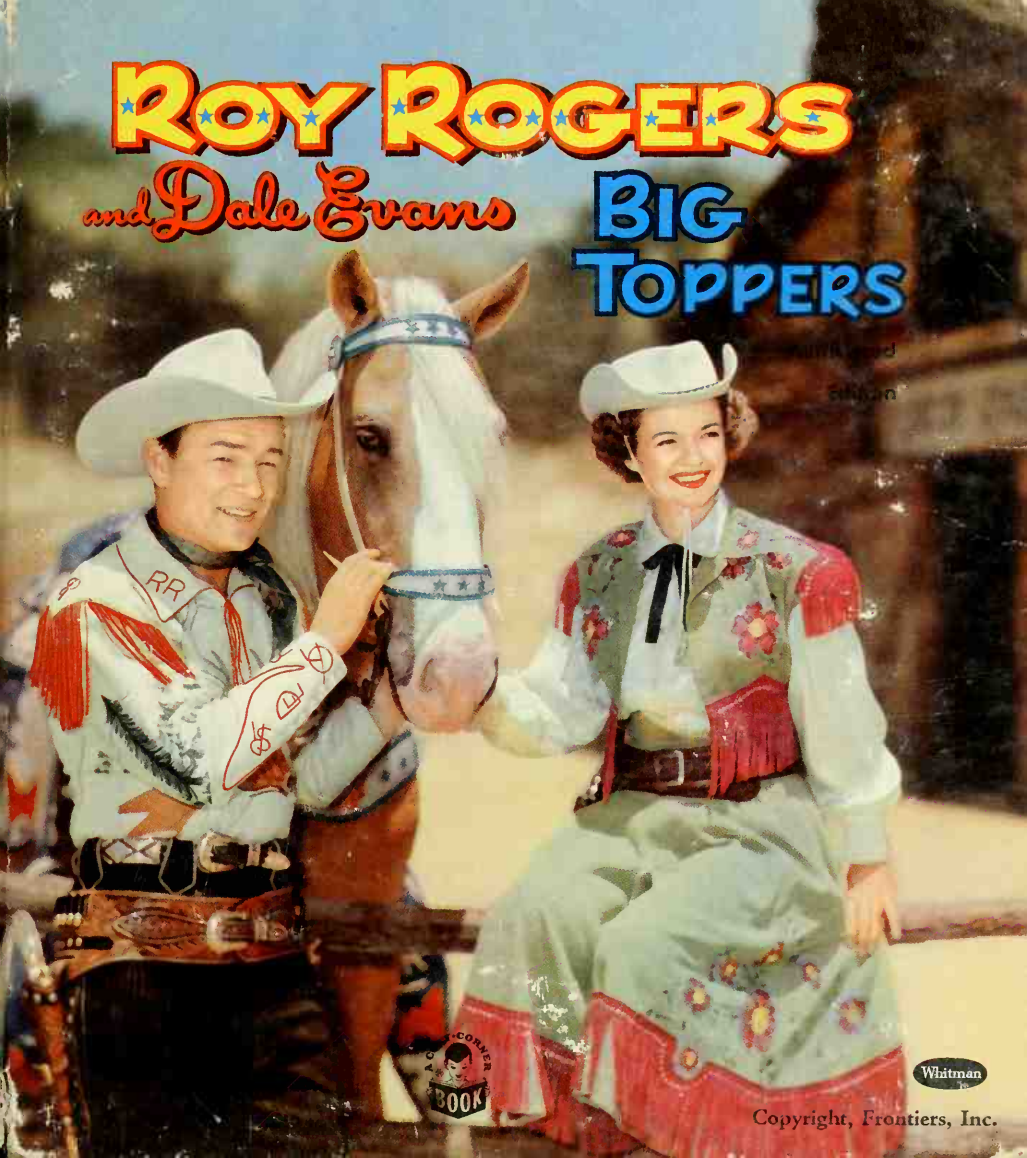
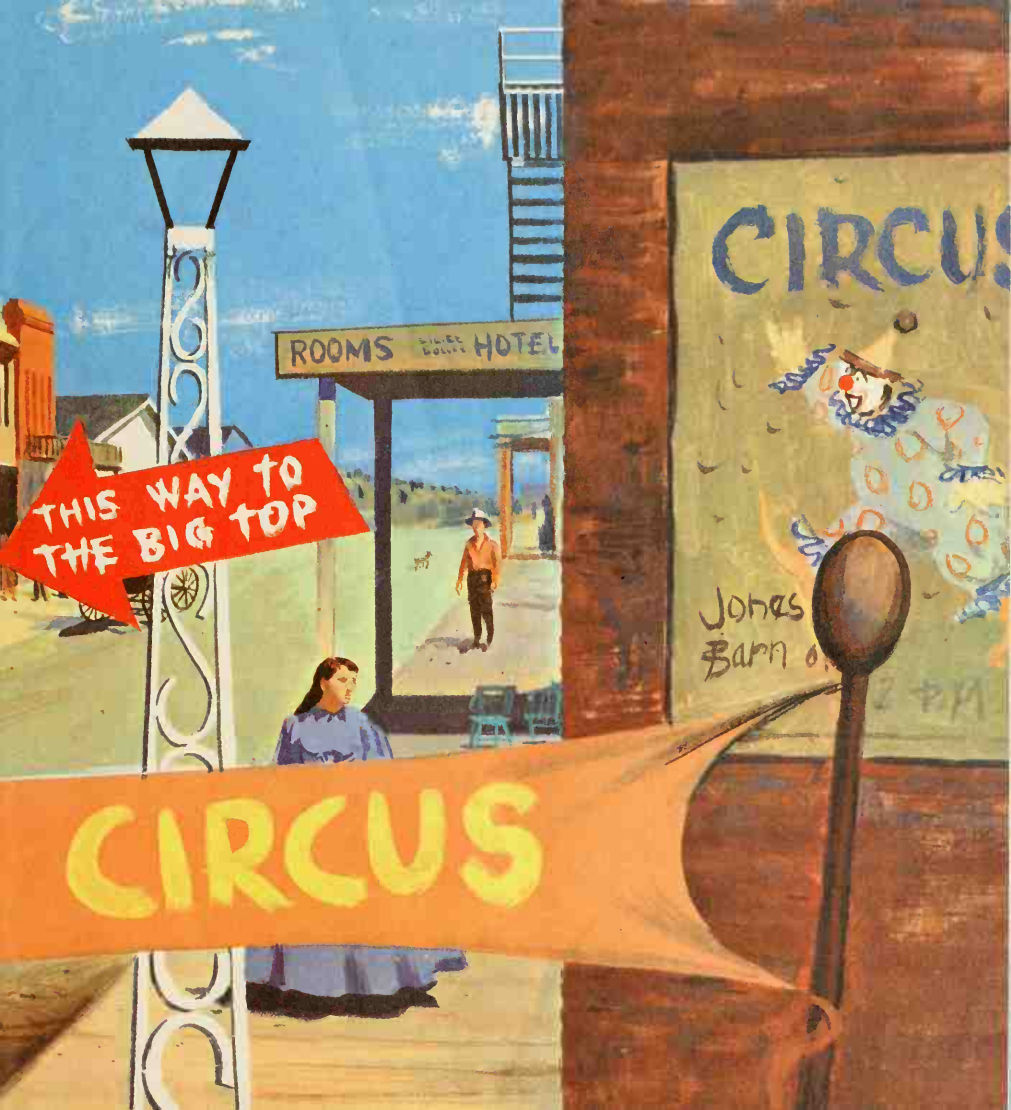


Copyright, Frontiers, Inc.

Tommy Johnston
COME TO THE


ROOMS
HOTEL
THIS WAY TO
THE BIG TOP
CIRCUS
CIRCUS
Jones
Barn

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010

http://www.archive.org/details/royrogersdaleeva00raci

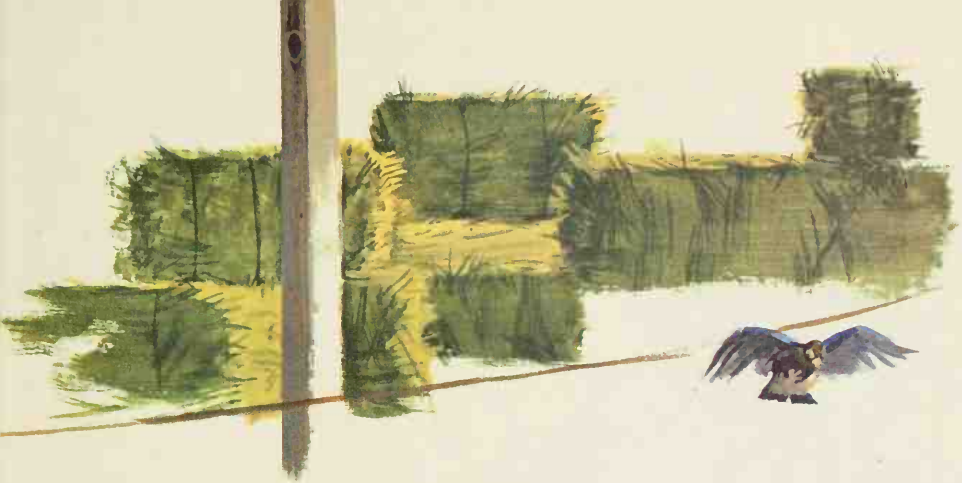
ROY ROGERS
and
DALE EVANS
in
Big Toppers

Authorized Edition

Illustrations by
Paul Souza

© COPYRIGHT, 1956, BY FRONTIERS, INC.

WHITMAN PUBLISHING CO., Rracine, WIS.
PRINTED IN U.S.A.



"Watch me now! This time I'll do it!" Tommy Wilks held his breath and stepped out on the swaying wire.

"Oh, Tommy, *don't!*" Beth Johnson squealed. "You'll fall and hurt yourself—bad!"

Tommy waggled the long pole that helped him keep his balance. Whew, that wire was thin! He put out one shaky foot, then the other. And then the wire swooped away, dropping him with a *thud* on the hay below.

"Tommy, you all right?"

"Are you hurt?"

Boys and girls hurried from all corners of the old barn.

"Let's forget this circus," said one of the boys worriedly. "Someone's going to get hurt if we keep on practicing."

"Circus? Who said circus?" demanded a voice from the doorway. They all turned and stared at the two people standing there.

"Why—why—" Tommy stammered, "it's Roy Rogers—and Dale Evans, too!"

The boys and girls made a rush for the door. "Hi, Roy! Hi, Dale! Come on in."

"We're going to have a circus next Saturday," Beth explained, when she finally had a chance. "That is, if we can ever learn any tricks."

"It's to earn money for Mrs. Brown," Tommy added. "She had a big fire at her ranch, and she has to buy food and new clothes and lots of other things for the children."

"Hey, Roy, watch this!" Bob Barton turned six fast somersaults across the floor, ending up with a crash against a stall.

"I'm Mighty Jack the Juggler," shouted another boy. He tossed three balls into the air, then gasped as one of them thumped on Dale's hat.

"Tim and Jim are our Cuckoo Clowns," said Tommy quickly, pointing to a pair of redheaded twins. The two little boys pretended to hop on make-believe ponies and ride away. They looked so funny that Roy and Dale laughed out loud.

"And who's the high-wire artist?" Roy asked, pointing up at the wire.

"I am." Tommy rubbed his sore spots. "Except that I keep falling off. That's the trouble—who wants to see a bunch of kids do tricks when they can't even do them well?"

"You'll do fine," Roy said firmly. "I'll take two tickets right now."

"Oh, we're not selling tickets," Beth explained. "After the show people can give us as much money as they want. That's why it has to be such a *good* circus."

"I see." Roy nodded. "Well, we'll be looking forward to it, won't we, Dale?"

"Oh, yes." Dale smiled at all of the circus performers. "Good luck to everyone of you."

Tommy and his friends practiced their tricks every single spare minute that week. They just had to be good, with Roy Rogers coming to see them. Once or twice Roy stopped at the barn to see how they were doing.

On Friday Tommy walked almost all the way across the wire without falling. He was so proud he almost popped his buttons.

Jack juggled three balls for a whole minute and never dropped one.

Beth, the lady lion-tamer, finally taught her pet tomcat to jump through a hoop—well, sometimes.

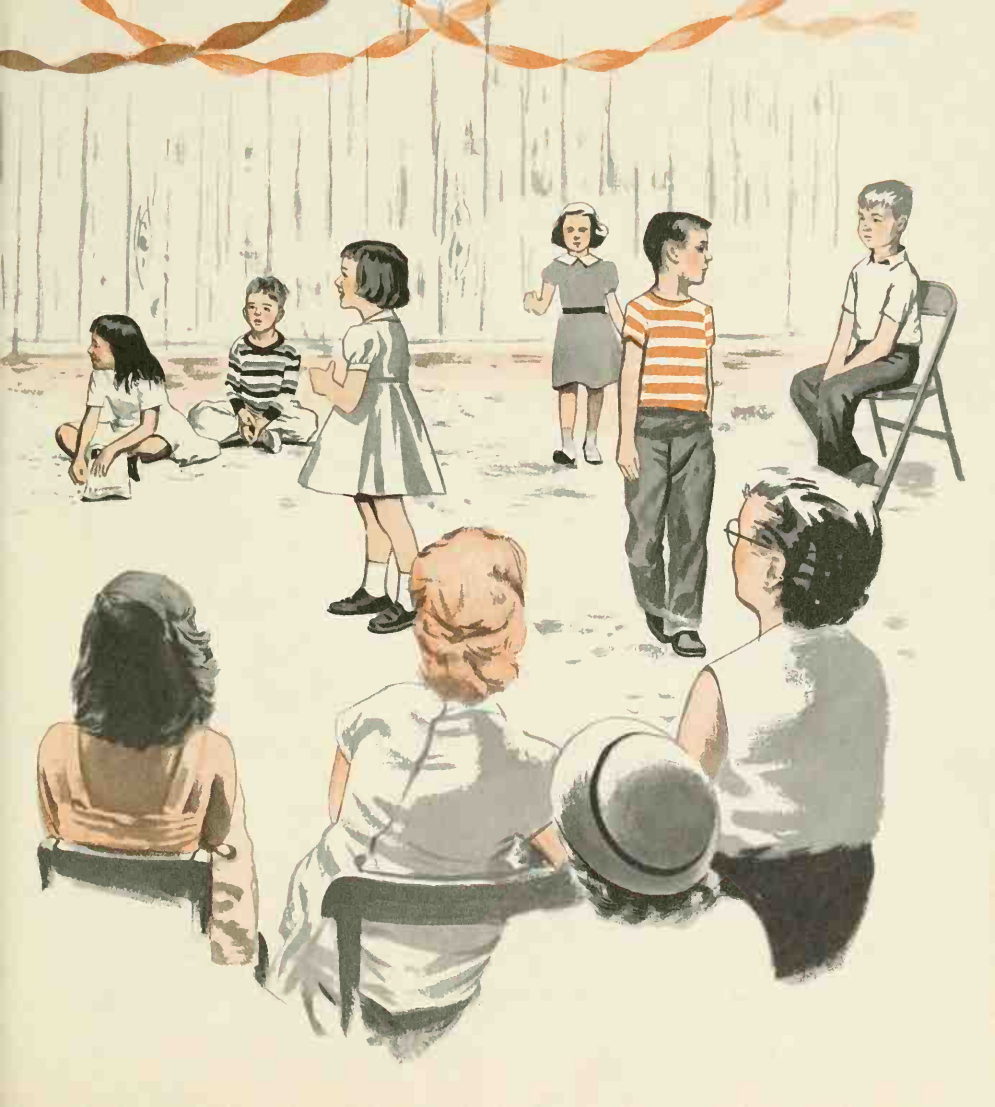
And Bob turned fifteen somersaults in a row without bumping into anything—although he almost squashed his pup Snoozy who was asleep in the hay.

"Well, we're ready," Tommy told them. "Wish we had something really exciting though. Wonder if I could stand on my head on the high wire."

"Ooooh," Beth squealed. "Please don't try it."

The next afternoon it seemed as if everyone in Golden Valley followed the big red arrows that led to the big top in the barn. There were whole families who had come from the far-off ranches to do their week-end shopping, and lone cowboys who had ridden in to spend their month's pay.

Roy and Dale winked at Tommy from their front seats as he came out to introduce the first act. "It's going to be great!" Roy whispered to him.



And it was. Everyone laughed and cheered as Mighty Jack the Juggler sent the colored balls flying through the air. They cheered Bob's flying somersaults, and whistled and stamped their feet when the stubborn tomcat finally jumped through

the hoop. They roared with laughter at the Cuckoo Clowns. And when Tommy walked right straight across the high wire with hardly a quiver, the crowd went wild.

But the show ended much too soon. "Is that all?" people asked each other in disappointment as the performers came out to bow. "We want more!"

Tommy looked at his friends in dismay. They had tried so hard—and folks did like the show—but there just wasn't enough of it.

"I—I'm sorry—" he began, then stopped. For at that moment Roy Rogers gave a loud whistle. And a second later a beautiful palomino horse pranced into the barn.

"It's Trigger!" The children in the audience shrieked with delight.

Roy leaned forward. "How about letting Trigger have the ring awhile," he suggested with a grin. "He's just itchin' to show off."

The big horse danced out in front of the crowd. And then, with Roy giving the signals, the palomino put on the best performance of his life. At Roy's command he "played dead," sat down on a chair, even pretended to have a broken leg.

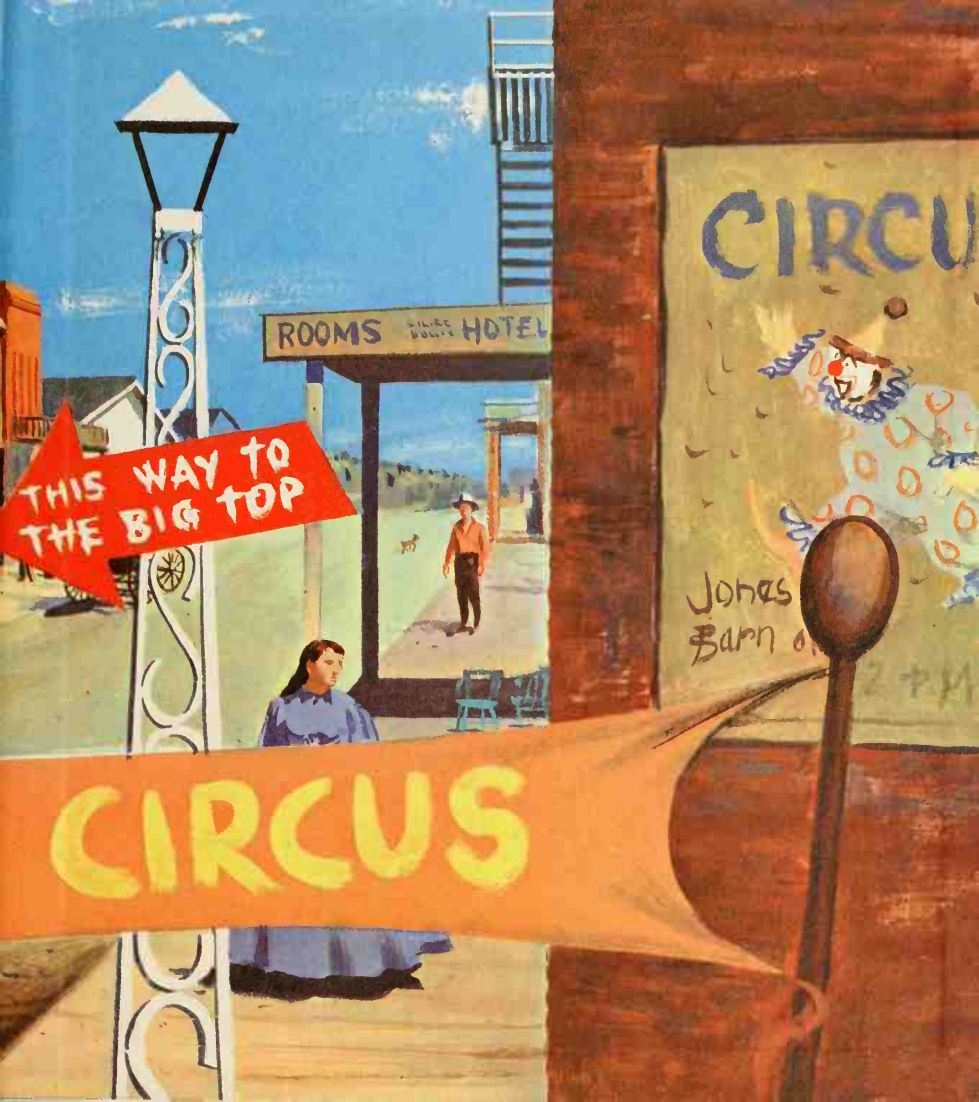
He slyly slid his master's gun from its holster, and when Roy lay down on the hay, the great horse brought a blanket and covered him. As a grand finale he and Roy had a boxing match, with Dale as referee.

"Honest, Roy, that was great!" Tommy exclaimed later, as the last wagon rumbled out of the ranchyard. "Everyone had such a good time that they dropped lots of money in the clown's hat. And some of the cowboys are going to get together and put up a new house for the Browns right away. Thanks to you, they'll have a home again."

"Don't thank me, Tommy." Roy put a hand on Trigger's neck. "You and your friends put on a great circus. Trigger was glad to be a part of it, isn't that right, boy?"

And the great horse nodded his head briskly and then bowed, as if to say that was just exactly the way he felt about it.

COME TO THE


ROOMS
HOTEL
THIS WAY TO THE BIG TOP
CIRCUS
Jones
Barn

COZY CORNER *Series*

In this series you will find favorite titles for tiny tots and original stories for the under twelve age group—all carefully selected and beautifully illustrated in color.

BUSY BILL — JENNY WREN'S NEW HOUSE — HELLO
WE THANK THEE — HURRAH FOR JONATHAN — MOTHER GOOSE
WHERE, OH WHERE? — POPPYSEED — STORIES OF JESUS
WHO SAID IT? — BUSY A B C — MY BIG BOOK
BIBLE STORIES — THROUGH MY WINDOW
SEE THE PICTURES—READ THE WORDS

Stories about your favorite characters (Authorized Editions)

DONALD DUCK — THE LONE RANGER — HOWDY DOODY
WALT DISNEY'S LADY — WALT DISNEY'S STORMY
ROY ROGERS — BUGS BUNNY
WALT DISNEY'S BEN AND ME

WHITMAN PUBLISHING CO., RACINE, WIS.

2407:25